

Response to Elders' Call for Input

Submitted by WROCK small group (Beth Jinkerson, Leader)

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Last weekend, the small group called Women Relying on Christ the King (WROCK) held a weekend retreat at Norris Dam State Park. This was primarily a working retreat with 4 objectives:

1. Give input to the elders on the Visioning 2010 results
2. Go over the provide input on the updated Ministry Brochure
3. Plan to revitalize and lead the women's program
4. Discuss how to add members to our small group

This paper summarizes the results of item number 1.

Worship Session

We suggest that items 1 and 42 are strongly related and agree that 5th Sunday meal and singing with an emphasis on small groups would be good for us. We could hear briefly from small group leaders, perhaps see a photo on the screen of the members of the group, and learn what's been happening in each group. We see no need to make changes in sermons, communion services, worship approach, or children's church other than what is the ongoing goal of growing spiritually as best we can. Using young people in all aspects of church work, and indeed specifically involving newcomers of all ages is a wise thing to do. Recognizing visitors will always be a little bit challenging because too much recognition can drive away some shy folks, and too little will offend those seeking warm greetings. We like Joe Lochamy's suggestions---be sure we are an open friendly church checking to be sure that all are welcomed and respected.

Idea – Two-levels of welcoming “goody bags” –a simple one for every single visitor and one more substantive (filled with information) for newcomers joining us, such as repeat visitors, those placing membership, new converts, and restored Christians. This would be the first step in a more organized plan for those newly being added to the church.

Idea – the idea of a short piece of research on safety and security is a good one which doesn't have to be elaborate. Where should we shelter during a storm warning, where is a safe evacuation spot in case of having to clear the building, a diagram of locations of fire alarms and other safety and medical or first aid equipment, and perhaps a list of certified responders who are members could be included. The WROCK group is willing to take on the generation of an outline and gather information if this idea is approved.

Leadership

Again echoing Joe's email, more elders and other leaders would be wonderful, and providing training for all new roles essential (note items 6 and 12). We love and respect our current elders and pay honor to them for all that they do. We believe they should be allowed to devote their energies to spiritual guidance, problem resolution at the highest level, and encouraging/overseeing all the other levels leaders and professionals and all members at Highland View. Those other roles would then have the majority of the tasks the church is engaged in: visiting, teaching, serving, training, creating awareness, stewarding our resources, and the like. We also suggest that the small groups would be a tremendous source of service hours to devote to getting to know each other and being aware of needs.

Idea – We think the input and responses indicate that members want to know more about our leaders, especially our elders. We cannot be privy to all the confidential matters that you attend to, but we could know you better as individuals and in your roles. This would help both long-term and new members. We suggest that the Women's Ministry take on the task of creating information highlighting each elder, deacon, ministry leader, teacher, missionary, and staff member in multiple ways --- a newsletter we plan to produce, on the website, in the slide show, in the newcomers' goody bags, and perhaps on a bulletin board.

Education

From our review of the ideas and input in this section, we strongly endorse the idea of a new convert class and other activities. Our insight is that not enough emphasis and support have been given to creating a highly evolved and closely allied education team consisting of Stacy, Erin, Patti, Neil, and Curtis (possibly others we are not aware of) under the oversight of the elders of course. Educating a congregation with so many levels of knowledge, age ranges, and experience in Christian living requires a truly concerted effort. We think all those involved have been working very hard to meet the needs in their specific assignments areas, and that all that is missing is this concept of education as a central function. A core curriculum, plans for providing balanced and complete foundation for all students, teacher training and resources, teaching assignments and substitute system, teacher nourishment and encouragement---all from a tightly bonded team rather than disparate age-level assignments could change the environment considerably.

Programs

We see the section on programs as a roster of opportunities waiting for someone(s) to step up and take off! Here are some specific ideas:

- We volunteer to take on number 32 (Women's Ministry), and request the elders formally approve us as the leadership team for that effort.
- We suggest that all of these ideas that are deemed viable can go onto an ongoing list of "Open Opportunities" (OpenOpp List) to be maintained as part of the ministry system which a team is currently working on.

- We think many of the ideas currently listed under Cooperation/Community belong on this OpenOpp List. Such as #49 (community events), and #50 (Christian College presentations); #53 (nursing homes which is an expansion of a current activity); #55 (blood drive), and #57 (adopt-a-school).
- We believe that free counseling should be confined to spiritual counseling only, versus general life skills or problem-specific counseling due to the need for highly specialized training and potential liabilities. Similarly, we feel that a day care center would be a financial stressor and liability-fraught venture that would not be good for our congregation currently.
- Idea – rather than adopting a school, we might adopt our members who are professional teachers. We know of eight currently in our membership. The Women’s program might be a good place to start with this idea.

Cooperation/Community

With the changes we suggested in Programs above, that leaves only the items for cooperation advertising, calendar of activities, and expanding church-in-the-park, all of which are sound suggestions. The cooperation effort is ongoing and may simply need more promotion; calendar of activities is a good candidate for inclusion on the website. Advertising and inviting friends to a church-in-the-park potluck is a good idea, although we’d need to think about any health department rules involved.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment and offer our ideas, our prayers, and our willing hands to make the church that meets at Highland View a congregation on fire for the Lord!